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Subject: Remnants.

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PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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# REMNANTS.

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“A remnant shall be saved.”—ROM. IX., 27.

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The whole passage is this :

“Esaïas also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.”

This reference to Esaïas interprets the use of this peculiar phrase, *a remnant*. There is something very pathetic in its use in the Old Testament. There never was a great people who had stronger national attachments, or a stronger love for home and their native country, than the Jews. It was a part of that economy under which they were brought up, to beget this intense local attachment, and this fidelity to the ideas which belonged to the old Hebrew commonwealth. And yet they lay between the great neighboring nations very much as wheat lies between the upper and lower millstones, and spent most of their historic life in being ground. They were bruised on the one side and on the other. Sometimes it was Damascus ; sometimes it was Babylon ; sometimes it was Egypt ; sometimes the Romans, and sometimes the Greeks. Somebody was at them pretty much all the time. Nor was it enough that they were made very wretched at home ; it was the custom to take them up and carry them away. By successive depredations the land was completely emptied. For instance, the central region of Palestine, which afterward was called Samaria, was so totally emptied of its original population, and another heathen population had so filled it, that for generations, probably, there was not a drop of Jewish blood in the veins of the settlers there. Afterward there was a scattering of the Jews among them ; these intermarried with them ; and so the races became mixed.

In these circumstances, it frequently happened that those who remained in the land at the south were but a handful, compared with the whole nation before the ten tribes were broken off and dispersed. When all the tribes were there in their might, they were a great and valiant people. There was not then, and I think there is not now, such a stock on the face of the earth as the Jewish, for



power, continuity, and various genius. It is in them yet. And it is a testimony to the force of moral training—for it was that which made them a great people. But when by the fate of war all but Judæa was swept away captive, it seemed to them that a mere remnant or fragment was left. Then they went, too; and a great many of their people perished on the way. Of those that went to Babylon, a great many were morally weak, and fell into the heathen habits, and lost the integrity of their fathers.

Yet there was always, even there, not a large number but a band of men who would not give up their faith, and who clung to each other. They were a remnant, though they were in captivity. And by and by, when the royal heart happened to be benignant and they got permission to return to their land, they went back, a miserable company of pilgrims, a few hundreds or thousands of people, to build again their cities and villages—especially to rebuild Jerusalem, the dearest, the most precious place to them on earth. They were but a remnant, yet they were full of courage, full of hope, full of energy; though so many exigencies had met them; though they had gone through so many sharp places; though so many times it seemed as if they were about to have their national life absolutely crushed out. And this remnant which was left became a seed planted again; and the nation throve afterward. And so that term *remnant* became a very striking term. It was full of associations connected with their affections and their national experiences. And when you turn to the Old Testament, you will find, all the way through, reference to these remnants.

“O Lord! save thy people, the *remnant* of Israel.” “Pray for us to the Lord, even for all this *remnant* of the people,” “Lord, wilt thou make an end of the *remnant*?” “Wilt thou make a full end of the *remnant* of Israel?” “It may be that the Lord God of Hosts will be gracious unto the *remnant* of Joseph.” “Lift up thy prayer for the *remnant* that are left.” “A *remnant* shall be saved.”

I could quote a score of passages not dissimilar to these.

What is a remnant? It is what is left over after all uses have been fulfilled. In manufacturing, it is after you have taken everything that is good and useful, and left just as little as you can. It is the clippings and the parings; the core and the skin; the edges, the fringes of things; the scraps; the odds and ends. With a great many things, the remnants, as in working gold and silver, are just as precious as any other part, because they can be remelted. But with a great many things it is not so. It is not so with cloth. It is not so with wood. It is not so with a variety of metallic substances. There are many things the remnants of which are comparatively useless. They certainly cannot answer the

purpose which was served by the great body, to which they belonged, although they may be turned aside to some inferior use, or dropped down to some inferior place.

But there is another way in which the word *remnant* is used in ordinary life. It may be applied to the result, the final condition to which things come by long usage. It sometimes has reference to the state of being worn out. Thus there are ships that are mere hulks, remnants, because they have gone through their allotted period. They are good to be broken up for firewood; or, it may be that they are good to be anchored at home as receiving-ships, to make miserable men more miserable in. They are simply remnants of what they were. There are machines that are worn out, and are scarcely fit to be melted over again, and are not fit for the purposes for which they were builded, and are thrown into a corner, or under an old shed. And there they lie, remnants of what they were. So there are remnants of flocks, and remnants of herds—the poor, the scabby, the sick, the maimed, the good-for-nothing, comparatively. There are also remnants of harvests, remnants of farming utensils, and remnants of wagons. There are remnants of all manner of things that men have had the use of, but that have passed their day, and are, comparatively speaking, of no value.

Men almost always think the time will come when they will use these things; but it never comes. They accumulate on our hands. Our garrets and attics are full of good-for-somethings which have had their day. Old chairs and sofas are stowed away which we think we shall have fixed and bring down; but we never do. There are bedsteads laid aside, antique and queer. There are all sorts of utensils and various scraps of things that have been useful, but that are no longer so. They are too good to throw away, and they are too poor to keep. They hover in a miserable existence half way between something and nothing.

Is there no parallel, no analogy, between remnants in goods, remnants in machines, and remnants as applying to man's life in society? Oh yes, a great deal. We may speak, for instance, of the remnant of an army after a great defeat. We speak of the remnants of tribes; as, for instance, the tribe of Benjamin, when for their guilty wickedness they had been well-nigh exterminated. We may see remnants of tribes among our American Indians. There may be a remnant of nations; Poland is such a remnant.

So *remnant* conveys, in all cases, an idea of comparative usefulness in human life and human organizations; or else an idea of weakness and danger; or an idea of liability to be swept away as rubbish; or an idea of being too much reduced, or circumscribed, or cut



into, to be of any consequence. In this sense the term is used with reference to human beings as well as with reference to property.

Let us now apply this phrase to secular life. *The remnant*, in general, means those who are cast aside in the great conflict of human life. And how great a treasury there is of remnants—that is, those who seem to have got through their function long before they have finished their life! How many young there are who are good for nothing! How many grown people there are who seem to have got through their period of usefulness, though they are not midway in life. There are many who are remnants by reason of their breaking down in health. There is for them no more vigor; no more elasticity of spirit; no more enterprise; no more power to drive through projected plans. They are not able to go out of the harbor. They are not sea-worthy.

Everybody that is sick is not a remnant necessarily, in any painful sense of the term. A man may be, on the other hand, a greater blessing when he is sick than when he is well. God's angels do not always appear when we are in the full flush of physical health.

Where sickness is not our own fault; where it does not come as a testimony to our crimes; where it is the sickness of one like Florence Nightingale, who lingers through months and through years, with hardly vitality enough to hold soul and body together, having worn out her noble life in the service of humanity, we should never apply the term *remnant* in the unfavorable sense. Where in the household the child is passing quietly and steadily away, how often is the sick room the joy and the peace of the whole house! How often are the venerable and the enfeebled the richest, although their life is over, and they are waiting for the last summons! A person may be broken down in health, and yet his counsel and example may be unspeakably beneficial. It is possible for men to do their life-work by their activity; but there are some men who, having done their life-work, seem to be ordained of God to stand still and shine. They are at peace with God. Their nature is harmonized. They are full of benignity toward their fellow-men. And oftentimes the two leaves of the gate of heaven in the household, are the old arm-chair and the cradle. Both the child and the aged person are helpless; but, though neither of them can do anything, and they have to be helped every day, and every hour of every day, yet they may be blessings of joy and peace in the household. Heaven's richest gifts may descend upon the other members of the family through their example or mediation.

There may be remnants from other causes: as where men have spent their forces as a fool spends his patrimony; as where men

have hastily run through, for their selfish gratification, the capital of life ; as where one has gained nothing worth gaining, and lost all that was worth keeping, and is disgraced in body and mind, and thrown out for others' sustenance. These are remnants with a vengeance. How many there are of them ! Society is full of them. They are here and there and everywhere.

Many are remnants in life from the loss of their property. There are men who begin well, and have a certain force up to mid-life, but who then in a convulsion, owing to some mistake, or by a process of slow decline, become bankrupt ; and the remainder of whose life is as naught. They are not unvirtuous, frequently, but are mild and excellent people ; yet the rest of their life is spent in feeble and ineffectual endeavors to reinstate themselves. And from year to year they have less and less power ; from year to year there is less and less substance to them ; from year to year they are less and less able to lean on themselves, and they lean heavier and heavier on others. And before they are sixty years of age they are absolutely dependent, requiring perpetually to be upheld. There are good people, kind people, people not bad in any sense of the term, who are utterly helpless. How full the world is of them !

It is an old proverb, that "it is hard to make an empty bag stand straight" ; and there is nothing so feeble as people who have lost all power to take care of themselves. They are often spoken of as if their feebleness was not itself a misfortune ; as if the loss, by the processes of life, of the vim on which largely depends their physical organization, was not a part of their troubles. Did you never see a great, strong, burly man, full of health, full of blood, with a big heart, and good digestion, making bones like flint and muscles like steel wire ; did you never see a man full of fire and indomitable energy, made, as it were, out of leather and iron—did you never see such a man look with pity and contempt on these miserable, shiftless, ne'er-do-wells, and say, "Why do not they do as I do ? Why did not the Lord keep them as he made them ?" Men with superior prerogatives and gifts are apt to domineer over others that are unfortunate. And it is those who have the power to plan and execute that we admire. We meet these healthy robust men on the street, we do business with them, and we come to respect them because of their energy and executiveness. It is the tool which cuts that we prefer and wish to keep ; and the tool that loses its edge the quickest we throw away first. And we come to use men as tools. It is the man that cuts and has the enduring edge, on whom we bestow the highest commendation. We praise the strong and prosperous, and pity the weak and feeble.



When a man is, by misfortunes of business, brought to a standstill, and thrown out of the whirl of creative industry it is possible that he will become merely a fragment, a remnant; but if he be largely endowed, if there be something to his manhood, he will not.

There is a fish called a *sculpin*. Nine-tenths of it are mouth, and one-tenth body, as I recollect it when a boy. Its chief business, apparently, consists in eating everything. And after it has eaten, nothing comes of it. It has a big tail, to propel itself with, a big head, a big mouth, and a very active stomach with which to do the work of digestion quickly. It is a do-nothing, gormandizing fish.

There are many men who are said to have the power of making wealth. They have. And they are *sculpin* men. They have an enormous maw, which they open and shut quick and often, devouring all that comes in their way. Nobody can surpass them in acquiring property. But what purpose does this wealth serve? Do they use it as a means for benefiting society? Is it employed as a sword with which to defend the weak? Is it an architect that builds? Is it a seed-sower that distributes? Or, is this quality merely the capacity to take in—to ingurgitate, *ingurgitate*, INGURGITATE? If so, then when misfortune comes, and a man loses all his wealth, what is left of him? Nothing—literally nothing. And you shall find that while some men, being bankrupt, lose almost nothing, other men, going into bankruptcy, come out with nothing. There is very little manhood in them aside from this peculiar genius or talent to amass property. They are not fertile in ideas. They are not richly endowed with sentiment. They are not distributors of happiness. They are not even reflectors of happiness. They certainly are not creators of it. They have very little power among men. As organizers of wealth they have some power, but not as organizers of thoughts and purposes. And when they are stripped of their property they become, most emphatically, *remnants*.

When one of a great nature is clothed in wealth, he is certainly more powerful; but if the raiment of wealth be taken from him, he is not less. He still has a great nature.

There can be no doubt (though there have been disputes among archæologists on the subject) that the Greeks colored and gilded the statues which adorned their temples. And undoubtedly those statues were more magnificent for being colored and gilded. But now that time has rubbed off the paint, and they are without a particle of embellishment, and are simple marble statues, they are exquisite still.

That is the case with a man whose force lies in his essential good-



ness and real manliness. Wealth may make him more beautiful; but strip him of wealth, and he does not lose anything. The man is there yet. No man can be called a remnant, though he be thrown out of life, if he retain in him the essential power of true manhood. But, oh! how many there have been who, when they lost their wealth, lost everything; and now chatter and talk, mostly repining. It was not always so, they say. They have seen better days. They remember the time when they had as much as the greatest; but they have lost it all. And since that was all they had, there is nothing left. Therefore they are remnants.

How many men are there who are thrown out of life from discouragements! They discover mistakes in their habits when it is too late to change them. I am always sorry to see anybody give up. I do not know that when a man fails at fifty or sixty years of age he can succeed again in the same path in which he formerly succeeded; but it seems to me that no man, in any circumstances, should say, in the spirit of discouragement, "It is no use for me to put forth exertion any longer." Just so long as a man has life and power to move he ought to keep laboring in some proper vocation, with some suitable ambition, and trust in divine providence. Yet how many persons there are in life who have reasonably good character and morals, but who are without any particular force, and who, after fighting battles here and there, at last give up in despair!

I sat in the window of my cottage in November, after the leaves had begun to fall to the ground, and saw the wind deal with them. In the summer when the wind blew the leaves sang. But the time came when they had lost their hold on the tree and dropped. And now, when the wind blew, the leaves no longer made melody in their motion. Before, when the wind came, they hung sweet and succulent and green on the tree, but now they whirled in wreaths past the house, some falling into a little depression; some nestling by the side of the fence; some falling under a bank; some along the hedge. Brown, sapless, withered leaves, they were, good for nothing except to make soil for another year.

I have seen a great many men in life that were wind-blown; and they held on to the stalk and the branch; and all the wind could do was to make them sing; but now I see that they are broken off from the tree. It is November with them; and the wind catches them, and whirls them away, and some land in poor-houses, and some in hospitals, and some in private dwellings, where they pick up chips, or do some other inferior service. They are remnants of life. And it is a very great sadness.

There is one thing that will not bear looking into, unless a man has a heart of philosophy, (which is a heart of stone;) and that is

human life. You can look at the condition of men; at the question of joy or unjoyfulness; at the subject of prosperity, or want of prosperity; you can look from house to house, in your own circle, perhaps, and among your own set, where everything is bright and cheerful, without having your feelings shocked or hurt. But go down among those that are poor and unfortunate and cast out; see how full life is of broken-down men, and discouraged men, and unprosperous men; go down, and down, and down, and still down to the bottom, and tell me if it is not sad? When a man's heart is moved with love for his fellows; when he counts every man his brother; when he looks at everything in the light of Christian charity, the saddest thing to look into is the structure of the lower half of human society—not that part where men are all like germs that point upward, and break through, and find the sun, and blossom; but that other part, where men are going down from the top toward the bottom, where the remnants are. Some portions of society are more than knee-deep, are *neck-deep*, with mere shattered remnants of men.

What vast multitudes of men there are who add nothing either to the moral, the social, or the material forces of society! They consume continually, but contribute nothing. What numbers of men there are in regard to whom society would feel itself benefited if they were dead, and it was rid of them!

It is not all the no-workers that society can afford to lose. Neither is it all the weak that society can afford to lose. The weakest things in the world are the most precious—the children. The joy of the house, the comfort of the heart, the music of life, the very prophet to us, is the child.

“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Children are God's messengers to us. They are the blossoms of human life. We could not spare them, babes though they be. They do not earn anything. They do not know how to sing or frolic. We could not spare even the new-born babe—the babe of a week. It is in every way crude. It is utterly unreciprocating. It is a mere germ-point, waiting for food, in our arms. And yet, how rich we are! How rich are our homes! And how it stirs, with its magnetism, every thought and feeling of the sensitive soul, and brings near the other life, and lifts us up, every day, in hymns and prayers and thanksgiving to God! How much we have to thank God for in the child! and yet how little, so far as present value of the child is concerned!

It is not the weak that cumber society; and yet society is like a ship that is overloaded with trash. It is weighed down with men who are good for nothing—men who, instead of adding to the hap-

piness of other people, more or less absorb the happiness of others. It is a sorrowful thing to think of, that when some fellow-creatures die, other people breathe freer.

For their sakes, I have been glad that some persons died. When one must go, I have prayed, "Let the struggle be cut short, O God of mercy! and let them fly away." But there are many others whom society would fain have taken away for its own sake. They are useless to themselves and to others. They are in the way. Nobody wants them. They are trash. They are a nuisance. When they die, people feel a gladness that they are gone, which decency will not allow them to express.

It is a sad thing that anybody should live in this world whom nobody wants to follow to the grave. It is a sad thing for me to go to Greenwood and walk through the strangers' burying-ground. It is a sad thing for one to die and have nobody think about him afterward, except to thank God that he is out of the way. It is sad to witness the burying of such a one, and see no mourning and sympathizing group standing by, and seeing the workmen unfeelingly pitch the clods upon the coffin, and hurriedly fill up the grave, apparently with no more thought or feeling than if it had not been a human being.

But if it be a child of respectable or wealthy parents, the grave is surrounded by a large company of relatives and friends, assembled to pay their last respects to the dead. And how gently is the coffin lowered to its place! How do the men regard the feelings of the bereaved ones! How careful are they to prevent the falling of stones harshly upon the lid! Everything is done in a decorous and sympathetic manner, so that nothing shall wound the afflicted ears or eyes.

It is an awful thing for a man to go out of life uncared for, or followed by the rejoicings of those who have long wished to be rid of him. It is an awful thing for a man to have lived so that he goes out of life unhonored and unregretted. There is an inhumanity in it. There is something in it which touches my soul to the very quick.

And yet, I cannot deny that there are hundreds, yes, thousands of persons, in this very city of Brooklyn (and I suppose many of them have walked by this house, and looked in at this door) who, if they were to die and be buried to-morrow, would not have a tear shed for them, and would leave the community better off for their going. What kind of a life is that, brethren, lived by a person who can better be spared from society than retained in it? What kind of a result is it of all the ministrations which are instituted



for his benefit, and all the advantages for growth and improvement which are showered upon him from every direction? Is there anything more sad than to see a man enjoy the plenitude of God's mercy in this world, and then die worse than the lower animals which have no such mental and moral endowments as he possesses?

Now, in regard to these remnants that go away from among us, there is this cheering thought, that though they have made a total wreck of their life here, it may, at least, have proved a seed.

I am not sorry when my corn is cut down in autumn. It is one of the most beautiful of crops. There is no more pleasing sight in the world, I think, than a field of Indian maize. Yet, when it begins to wither, to shrink up, and the wind makes harsh whistlings through it, I do not feel badly. Why? Because the ear is there, and it is ripe, and I have my grain. And if I want to, I can plant it again the next spring, and have another harvest the next autumn.

And when a man is all withered and shrunk, and dies out of the refuse heap of life, if I am sure that the corn is in him, and that in the other life it will be planted again, and will spring up, and grow and ripen, then there is no occasion for me to feel badly. And I fain would hope that it is so with a great many.

I cannot bear to think that the poor, miserable, unenlightened slaves, that groped in darkness on the plantation, knew almost nothing and were not permitted to learn anything, lived a life of toil like beasts and crept to their hovel at night scarcely able to get there, and were dragged out again early in the morning, until at last they died—I cannot bear to think that they never have another chance. I believe they do have a better chance than they had here, cursed, as they were, with a human master. If here men are children of ignorance, and if they have had no opportunity for growth in manhood on earth, I fain would believe that God will have some remedial plan of mercy for them; but when a man has lived in the full blaze of Gospel light, and has thrown away every opportunity for the development of his moral and spiritual nature, I do not believe there is any new chance for him. He has had his chance, and has not improved it.

It matters not that a man has had any amount of misfortune here, if, once escaping from this life, he lands bravely and safely and strongly on the shore of immortality, and is a man there in Christ Jesus. What do you suppose a ransomed soul in the spirit-world cares for all the winds that once blew upon him on earth? Blessed is it to become a wreck, if angels are the wreckers, and you are gathered up into life and immortality!

Those of you who are familiar with Western scenery, know that

you can ride through a long forest, and then come to a clearing. And while there will be an orchard here, there will be a belt of forest around the little square opening ; and there will stand in the midst of it gaunt, branchless, girdled trees. The settler takes his ax, at the right period of the year, and goes round and chops, just above the swell of the roots, a ring which stops the flow of the sap. The tree does not fall down immediately. During the first year it holds its branches and leaves. But there is no return of the leaf to it. Then the weather beats upon it. And every successive year it stands with fewer and fewer branches. And at last some morning, after a great storm, it lies its whole length upon the ground.

Brethren, I see many men standing like trees, branchless and gaunt in a clearing, girdled apparently. They are waiting for their overthrow. And it grieves my heart to see great natures, vast trunks, towering up, spreading abroad their branches, fit to have been pillars in the Temple of God, but girdled, and dead in trespasses and in sins.

Oh, that from among such there might be a remnant that yet should be saved ! Oh, that there might be among those who have lived through twenty years under my ministry here, and who have been good friends and neighbors, and whose lives have been rich, often, with special offices of kindness, would treat my Saviour as well as they treat me !

How piteous it is to see the remnants of a family ! The father and the mother lived Christian lives, and have gone to heaven. One by one the brothers and sisters were gathered into the fold of Christ. But for some reason one single one stood out. Perhaps he became wedded to the world. Perhaps he got into bad company. Perhaps he maintained outward morality. At any rate, he seems, from one or another cause, to have resisted every religious influence.

Is there not in my hearing some person who is saying, "That is I. Every member of my father's family except me is a Christian" ? Is there not some one present who says, "My brothers and sisters have died and gone to heaven ; but I am not on the same road which they traveled" ? Are there not persons here who are the last remnants of glorious households, and who are not saved ? Oh ! shall not even these remnants be gathered in ?

Go back and think of the boyhood circle that used to play baseball with you on the village green ! One became a drunkard ; another went to prison ; another made shipwreck of himself in business ; another went to the city and prospered. They are all gone, but you and two or three others are left, and are remnants. Where are

the boys that used to sit in the same class with you ? I count up my school-fellows every year ; and every year it takes less figures. The numbers are running thin.

One of the most extraordinary scenes that I recollect took place right here. An old man, during my father's lifetime, came trembling up to the platform, and said to me, "Your father and I were classmates, and beside him and me there is but one of our class left, and he is dying. When your father dies, let me know, will you ? for I shall be the only one remaining." He took it for granted that he would outlive my father. He did ; but now he is gone, too. There is not even a remnant of that class. They have all passed away. And how many circles your mind forms when you come to think of them, of which but a remnant—one or two, are left !

Now, the question which it seems to me every man should put to himself, is this : "Is the circle to which I belong a divided circle ? Are a part here, and a part there ?" Have you the same hope that sustained the others in dying. Have you the same triumphant faith which they had ? They have all gone, you are the last, and you must soon follow them ; and you have no comfort, and no joy, and no hope. They all trod a triumphant way which you never put your foot into. They have gone before, and you are not following.

It is a terrible thing to be a remnant—to be the last child in a family—and not go to heaven where the rest have gone ; or to be the last member of a circle of Christians, and not to be a Christian. It is a terrible thing to be the only one left of a company, and be lingering and waiting, soon to go, they saved, and you lost.

There are many in every congregation, who, looking upon them from the point of congregational association, are but remnants. In every prominent congregation, there are those who live through a vast amount of influence, seeming to be unchanged.

I remember very well that toward the close of my pastorate in Indiana, I sat one Sabbath day and looked over the congregation. It was a small one. Before I came here, I never preached to a congregation that averaged more than two hundred, or two hundred and fifty. I could count all the men in the congregation who were not hopefully Christian. There were about fifteen. To my certain knowledge, they had gone through four or five revivals of religion during my day, there ; and I had labored with them as a brother would with a brother. I had plied them, and preached at them, and prayed for them, and approached them on every side, and made use of every means at my command, and studied them, and at times they seemed about to come into the kingdom ; yet they remained as they were, unregenerated. I knew the after history of about



one half of them, and I think that none of them ever became Christians. A considerable proportion of them died in a way which precludes the hope of any spiritual change. And those that were left were the remnant of that congregation. Everything, apparently, had been used. The material had been wrought up close. Here were, so to speak, the clippings, the remains that were unusable.

In every congregation that has been sitting under the ministration of the sanctuary for any considerable time, there are many that must be called remnants. There are men in this congregation—men to whom I have no further message; men whose understanding I know I have reached over and over again, but whose susceptibilities have not been awakened, and who have been able to resist moral influence, to maintain their life of this world, and keep away from the love of God, and live for time, and not for eternity. All that conversation could do, and all that preaching could do, and all that divine influence in the outpouring of God's spirit could do, seems to have been in vain as far as they are concerned, and there they stand.

This leads me to the single other view that I shall take of this subject; and that is of the remnant of *life*, looked at from a religious standpoint. It may well be applied with very great seriousness and very great profitableness in this direction. We are responsible to God for our talents, for our character, and for our conduct, here below; and there are a great many persons who have run through their career of evil on earth, until their end is near, and there is but a remnant left. There are men who have run through their career of drinking until they are at the very last period of their life. There are a great many who have run through their career of sensual indulgence until their strength is gone, and their stamina is taken out of them, and they have come to their last period of earthly existence. There are a great many who have by various infractions of known laws, by pushing animal excess to the uttermost extreme, wasted their life, and come to the last part of their career. In all probability they cannot live five years more. Many of them will not live one year. With some it is a question of months.

Is there any use of preaching the Gospel to such men? Yes. A man may have sinned against every organ of his body; he may have sinned against the laws of nature (and no man can break the laws of nature and not break the moral laws of the universe); he may have sinned against his light and knowledge; and he may have come to his very last hours; and yet there is hope for him. There are many fearful presumptions against him; but, after all, there is hope enough to justify prayer for him, and efforts to save him. If there is a person in this congregation who thinks he is such a one,

his condition justifies prayer, and labor, and the most vehement urgency, that the remnant of his career may be saved, that his last hours may yet be redeemed, and that a faint light from the very closing period may be cast back upon the darkness of all that has gone before.

• There are a great many who have gone through prosperity in this world, and have come very near to the end of their career. Their life has not been marked by vice; but they have lived for the ordinary aims; for the pride of life; for the events of time. They have had their will in wealth and influence and position; they have had in various ways all that heart could wish: and they have gone through early life, and through middle life, and through the first years of age, and have gone clear down to old age, without God and without hope in the world. They have had all that the world could give them; or, at any rate, all that it will give them; and everything is expended. Their years are all that remain to them; and these are few. They have come to the very end of life. You cannot say that they have ever committed a crime, or that they have ever been guilty of a vice. You can say that they have committed many mistakes and foibles; but externally they have been very good members of society. Yet to that great spiritual brotherhood, to that great realm of life whose morality is higher than the functions of human society, they have not been faithful. And they are, with all the mercies of God which they have had showered upon them, going out of life without God, without gratitude, without love, without hope, almost without character; and there is but a remnant of their years left them.

Shall that remnant be thrown away? Having thrown their first twenty years on the world; having thrown on the world twenty years more, and five or ten years more, they have, perhaps, a year or two left. And shall that perish? Shall that be thrown away? Or, shall they seize this last lingering period, that the remnant of their time may be saved?

My heart is turned toward the remnants to-night. I would that by the spirit of God I might reach to awaken unusual thoughts and unusual purposes in the minds of many who are left over from former efforts; who have resisted all prior appeals; who have stood out against God's great mercy; who have been going wrong, under the dominion of pride, and selfishness, and vanity, and lust, and those appetites and passions which corrode like canker.

I pray God, by his good Spirit, to send, to-night, an arrow home to many of these lingerers. What do ye here now, waiting after all are gone, unclothed and unprepared to meet the wrath of God's laws

which you have broken in their core and nature? Death is near, it may be, with uplifted hand, to smite you, and you are thoughtless and careless!

Oh, remnant of the household! oh, remnant of the congregation! oh, remnant of men! in the last moment, even at the eleventh hour, for the remnant of your wasted life, there is an opportunity for escape. Embrace it. Turn to God and live—here, it may be for a moment, but there forever and forever.



### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We are gathered, this evening, O Lord our Father, drawn hither by conscious want, and by a great many sweet remembrances. How many years have we come hither bearing trouble, bearing a sense of weakness, and bearing in us the signs of death! How many times have we come dark, to find it light; and weakened, to find that strength was waiting for us. We have seemed shut out of the great realm of prosperous men, and our way has seemed at times forlorn; and yet we have been restored again to sympathy and to joyfulness. How often have we come up here soddin in selfishness, sordid in avarice, and with the world all resting upon us! And here we have beheld in the light of thy countenance better things than the abundance of this world. Hope and faith and joy have shone in our faces; and we have felt ourselves rebuked, and have gone home again determined that while we were diligent in business, we would also be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Thou hast broken our staff; that on which we leaned is gone from us; we have been cast down to the ground, seemingly overthrown; and yet here we have been again restored to strength, and have found that God was more to us than father or mother, than brother or sister, or than companion. And with the mystery of thy secret love, with the strange work which thou dost perform, hidden in the soul, thou hast brought us again to comfort and joy. And if we were to rehearse all the moods of sorrow, and all the experiences of relief, which have clustered about this place, how many burdens have been rolled off! how many hopes have been inspired! how many tears of joy have taken the place of sorrowing tears! how our life has been enlarged, reaching forward into the other! how our expectations have been guided! The night would not suffice us for the rehearsal of all the blessings which thou hast bestowed upon us.

We thank thee, O Lord, that we stand alike in the midst of thy mercies. We are in a wilderness of thy goodness. And yet, there are days in which the earth seems barren and lifeless. Thy paths drop fatness, and that we know right well; and yet some days there are in which it seems to us as though there were nothing left in the world of God.

And now, we beseech of thee, O Lord, that thou wilt yet again hear the voice of supplication; or, better than that, pray for us. Grant that the Spirit may strive in us, and that God may answer the yearning Spirit rather than our petition. For we know not what to pray for as we ought. And the Spirit doth make intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And wilt thou look within us and see what we need, and deal



with us according to our necessities. Take away what we need to have taken away; multiply what we need to have multiplied; strengthen in us what we need to have strengthened; augment in us what needs to be augmented. Do for us according to thine insight and thine infinite love and mercy, and not according to our foolish and imperfect petitions. How many things we have asked, dear Father, the giving of which would have been our ruin! How many times thy No hath been our salvation! How many times we have besought thee to ward off things which must needs come; and in them we have found our life afterward. And even those great troubles that bruised us, yea, cast us down, and left us for dead upon the ground, though for the present they were not joyous, but grievous, afterward wrought out the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

And now we have come to know so little about ourselves, we have come to have such a sense of our own helplessness, that we long for thy wisdom rather than our own. Do thou for us the things that are necessary. Give what thou wilt. Take away what thou wilt. Infinite love cannot err. Thy tenderness surpasses that of any heart but thine. According to thy loving kindness and thy tender mercies dwell with us.

And we pray that every heart in this house may be won to God, and that every sinner may be brought back to the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul, and that every one who knows the light may make it known to those who sit in darkness, and that every soul that is fed may carry food to those that are hungry, and that every one that is healed may succor those that are ready to perish in sickness. And may our hearts be turned one toward another. Grant that there may be the spirit and the presence of God mightily in the midst of this congregation. And may there come life where there is death, and restoration where there is captivity, and liberty where there is bondage. Grant that thy work may prevail against sin and the kingdom of Satan and darkness.

And we pray that thy power may be felt in all this city, and the great city adjoining. Bless those faithful men who labor for the promotion of temperance, and those who labor for the reformation of morals in every form. Be with those that search out the sick, and go among the poor, and visit hospitals and jails; and those that go into waste places and highways and byways. May they themselves be filled with the light and sweetness of the love of Jesus Christ, so that they shall be as men who go forth from the garden, their very garments bearing the perfume of its flowers. And grant, we pray thee, that heaven, though it seem to be so withdrawn from sight, may much of it shine upon man, that he may bring forth fruit. Bless the earth. Hast thou forgotten to be gracious, O God, that the isles wait in darkness so long, and that continents are brooded with night, and that nations are destroying nations, and that wrath and unmercifulness and hatred do canker the human soul? Oh! when wilt thou bring to pass the promises that have hung on the horizon so long, as the Morning Star that rose not, and that yet, blessed be God! sunk not away. We look to their light. We pray for the coming of the Sun of righteousness. We pray for the final glory of this earth; for the augmentation of man; for the development of society; for the purity, and peace, and prosperity, and gladness that shall come when intelligence shall have driven ignorance away, and true faith shall have purged the earth from superstition, and when love shall drive selfishness and cruelty forth never to come back again. Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praise evermore. *Amen.*

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